chair in which his sitter is seated, the table-cover on which the hand rests, or the satin dress in which a lady is attired, the vitality of the portrait is lessened, if not entirely lost; for the semblance of life in the face is made to appear unreal by contrast. So in a landscape; if a bit of rock in the foreground be painted with microscopic minuteness, unity of effect is destroyed; for it is evident that the eye, while scrutinising a near object, cannot take in remote ones at the same moment. Who does not remember to have seen instances where the sails of a windmill in a landscape, or a vessel tossing on a rough sea, have been represented so as to appear fixtures, reminding one of those sporting prints where the wheels of a chaise are depicted as spinning round with such velocity, that the spokes of the wheels are invisible, while the body of the vehicle, the horse and harness, the driver and his costume, are represented with all the minute details of still life? There is a popular coloured print of a smuggler presenting a pistol, in which it was attempted to convey an effect of reality by protruding the figure out of the canvas; a violation of the principles of art that results in making the figure appear as flat as a pancake, and the pistol to lose what appearance of projection the painter had given it. The absurd and now obsolete practice of cutting out the portrait of a child from its panel and sticking it up in a corner to deceive the eye, results in a failure; for the loss of the background renders the figure flat, and destroys the illusion. In the execution of modern pictures, too, we have so often to regret the absence of luminous brightness in the light, of transparency in the shadows, and consequently of rotundity and animation in the forms, and of atmosphere in the *ensemble*, that it is becoming evident to some of the most thoughtful and inquiring artists, that the modern painters have lost sight of the principles of colouring which were acted upon by the Venetian, Flemish, and Dutch schools, and also by our own Gainsborough.

But as design is more especially the subject of this paper: let us pass to the department of ornamental art, in which there is most need of principles to guide the inventive talent and adaptive ingenuity of ornamentists.

The value of ornament consists in its being used to add beauty to common things, and to relieve the blankness of bare walls, floors, and ceilings. Since the Puritans banished colour from English churches until the present time, decorative art has performed perpetual penance in a sheet of whitewash, and our national ecclesiastical architecture has been mutilated and deformed, not only by tasteless churchwardens, but by accomplished architects, who, in respect of English architecture, were as ignorant as their employers. But let us not forget what we owe to Wren; nor that to his discerning encouragement we owe the development of the genius of the greatest ornamentist this country has seen—Grinling Gibbons, whose wood carvings have been so well appreciated and emulated in our own day by Mr. Rogers.

In entering upon the wide field of ornament, it becomes necessary to draw a distinct line of demarcation between the several branches of ornamental design; namely, the ornamentation of architecture; of vessels, utensils, and implements; and of textile fabrics. Each of these is governed by different principles, but in all, the practice of illusory imitation is alike objectionable: true art repudiates shams. The great blank space of raw white plaster that shocks the sense as well as the taste in almost every room we enter, from the poor man's garret to the gilded saloons of the wealthy, is a relic of puritanical aversion to colour; and the drab hues that make dreary our parlours and dining-rooms, are only a Quakerish compromise. The ceilings

> "Where sprawl the saints of Verrio and Laguerre."

are bad in taste, and equally inconvenient and disagreeable to look at: even pictures, though by Rubens, Titian, or Michaelangelo, when let into a ceiling, are solecisms in point of taste; for the penalty of admiring them is a crick in the neck, even though, as in the churches and palaces abroad, you are accommodated with cushions to enable you to view them in a supine posture. Mimic balustrades and apertures in ceilings, and still more, pictured skies, are obvious anomalies; they fail as attempts at illusion, and as ornaments they are not beautiful. Ornament is indispensable in a ceiling; and whether it be moulded in relief or not,—colour, or gilding, if not both, according to the character of the apartment and its ornaments and furniture, is necessary to make it harmonize with the walls: a waste of whiteness affronting a Persian carpet and pictured walls is a barbarism that, accustomed as we are to see it, cultivated taste revolts at. Yet paper-hangings are often so ugly as to make one resigned to the drab-tinted stucco. I have a vivid impression of the effect of a particular room, of the gloomiest coldness, that colour of any kind, not absolutely discordant, is preferable. This room was painted a leaden-coloured drab, with raw-white ceilings, of course, and it was hung with sad-coloured draperies edged with black; the chimney-piece was as black as the stove; the chairs and sofa, covered with black horse-hair, stood upon a blue and black carpet; and prints in black frames enlivened the walls: it was a room in half-mourning, and its gloom fell like a pall upon a visiter. The exhilarating influence of a cheerful and elegant room is only inferior to that of a sunny day out of doors, or lively and agreeable society: black,—whether marble, horse-hair, wood, or iron,—should be inadmissible.

In painted decoration, and in the patterns of paper-hangings, curtains, or carpets, form ought to be regarded chiefly, if not merely, as a vehicle of colour. How tiresome and tantalizing is the reiteration of patterns in a paper-hanging, especially when great splotches of red, or some powerful colour, are scattered over it, or cutting lines of blue, or some other positive hue, divide the wall into strips. Intense colours ought to be used sparingly, and skilfully distributed, so as to enliven the mass of secondary tints; for a room is made to seem smaller by strong contrasts of colour or harsh lines, as ceilings are apparently lowered by deep mouldings or powerful colours; indeed, vivid colours are not essential either to the elegant or cheerful aspect of a room. The walls should form a chaste, but not dull, background to the furniture, pictures, and occupants; gaudy carpets of large patterns are therefore objectionable. If positive colours are used, these should be subdivided by the intricacies of a small and undefinable pattern, like the Persian and Turkey carpets, which have never been equalled for richness and sobriety combined.

The art of the decorator is not yet rightly understood, and therefore not duly appreciated. It should not be confined to the painting of walls and ceilings; for the effect of the richest and most beautiful decoration may be destroyed by a discordant carpet, by hangings of inharmonious hues, and by ill-chosen furniture; nay, even by the injurious contrast of a hall, staircase, or ante-room, while a house may be rendered elegant and cheerful, without any parade of ornament, by a skilful assortment of colours, suited to the aspect and uses of each apartment, and the juxtaposition of ante-rooms and lobbies. But to effect this requires practised skill and taste on the part of the artist.

In designing patterns for textile fabrics, the uses to which the drapery is to be applied requires to be more considered than is commonly the case. Obviously the pattern for a dress should not be so large as that for a curtain; yet one sees silks and satins in the mercers' windows, the wearers of which would certainly appear as if robed in window curtains, or wall hangings. The elaborate imitation of flowers in dresses is wrong upon principle, because the effect is to divert attention from the *ensemble* presented by the dress of the wearer; the nondescript patterns of India shawls, in which the effect is seen in the mass, are still superior to modern designs. A great nosegay of flowers on a shawl, or a dress sprinkled with bouquets, is only a degree less absurd than the horns and trumpets which decorate the dressing gown of Signor Lablache in "Il Fanatico per la Musica." The effect of harmonious combinations of colour is what the pattern designer should rely upon; and of these the variety is endless. The famous Swiss designer of patterns, whose fecundity of invention is extraordinary, when asked where he got the materials for his varied and beautiful combinations, replied, "The wealth of nature is inexhaustible." And he then explained that the colours of birds and insects, of lichens, of sea-weeds as well as flowers, all furnished him with harmonious contrasts of colour; but he did not content himself with picturing the objects entire—he did not sprinkle a dress with beetles or humming birds, or cover it with lichens or sea-weed, nor even with the most beautiful flowers; but he selected a particular harmony of hues, perhaps in the bottom of the calyx of a flower, on the breast of a bird or the back of an insect, and applied it by means of some arbitrary form, suggested also, probably, by a natural object. The resources of the pattern designer in nature are boundless, if he uses them aright; but to copy literally the most beautiful object is crude and wasteful error. In designing patterns for draperies of all kinds, the artist may be content to seize and adapt the suggestions of nature. In designing decorations for architecture his fancy should become suggestive of ideas. But in both, wherever colour is employed, forms are valuable chiefly as a means of varying the quantities and distribution of colour; form is the medium for displaying colour. In draperies that hang in heavy folds like curtains, it is evident that the shape of the pattern is not seen truly; its effect, as shown in the play of colour, is infinitely varied by the folds, and therefore a large bold pattern, as in damask, is preferable. In dresses where the folds are smaller, and especially in scarfs, angular patterns are not only admissible, but pleasing, because the multitude of cross-folds not only destroys the formality of pattern, but gives rise to an infinity of piquant combinations. But when large plaids are worn in the flat drapery of a cloak, the back of the wearer is squared out in chequers, and one might almost as well hang a chess-table cover over the shoulders. So in damask, to hang flat in the panels of a room or diapered walls, the pattern need be so subdued either by slight modulations of colour or smallness and intricacy, that the eye should be prevented from resting on the forms, and regard only the effect. The pattern of a carpet, by the same rule, should not provoke attention to its details: its effect alone ought to be attractive. Nothing can be a greater violation of the principles of art than the French tapestry carpets, which, to be seen properly, ought to be placed in an empty room. In modern apartments, where the floor is almost hidden by chairs and sofas, tables, and musical instruments, what are called bold and handsome patterns can never be seen; even if it were desirable. And to work coats of arms and other heraldic devices, is to trample upon the pride of ancestry and the pomp of heraldry. While noting the impropriety of applying honoured symbols to base uses, I may be allowed to throw a word of derision on the offensive impropriety of pictured handkerchiefs: sporting men may like to tie the portrait of a race-horse round their necks, and country cousins may find a map of London on cambric as useful as the dwellers in the backwoods of America, where paper was scarce, did the newspaper which the Yankees tell us was printed in clay on linen, and washed off when the news was read to receive another impression; but to dry the moisture with Jenny Lind's charming face is a very ignoble mode of complimenting the Swedish nightingale.

In designs for hardware, whether of silver or brass, glass or porcelain, form, and proportion are paramount; no ornamentation, however rich or fanciful, can redeem bad proportion or ungraceful form; while a beautiful form unadorned is itself ornament of the most refined and pleasing description. Neither should ornament be so prominent as to overlay, or prevent the full development of form; while neither form nor ornament ought to interfere with utility. The principle is so obvious that it is surprising there should be any need for enunciating it; yet if we look into the windows of our china shops, the infinite variety of ugliness of shape and proportion displayed in vases and other ornaments for mantel-pieces, is extraordinary. And the designs made by artists for Felix Summerley's art-manufactures are more admirable for fanciful ornamentation than elegance and symmetry of form. But this does not dimi-

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